Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0795IN-1 for Michigan City Area Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	9

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

With respect to adopting standards and assessments Indiana has adopted a new accountability system will assign grades that more sensitivily measure items such as career and college readiness. The teacher evaluation system that the state adopted and the district agreed to nicely builds on these standards and assesments and data driven decision making is well integrated throughout including the Building Leadership Team (BLT) which provides a consensus approach to improvement around discrete areas connected to improving student achievement. The personalized learning environments are through its Personal Learning Plan (PLP) are accessible from the district's website enable all students to achieve a personal learning plan and puts in place processes and learning opportunities to ensure that each student progressively creates and achieves his or her personal learning plan. It is not clear to what extent teachers are targeted to where they are needed most although it is credible to believe that "all teachers in the target schools currently meet the Indiana educator effectiveness." The reform vision as outlined seems carefully calibrated to achieving success integrating as it does school building level reform and restructuring with well thought through teacher, principal and student accountability systems.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The selection criteria was based on low performance as evidenced by ISAT+ and ECA results. However, because the districts poverty level exceeds 71 percent the reform efforts wlll be extended to the district as a whole. The selection methodology seems sound
and the the support mechanism by which the LEA will provide needed technical assistance and other resources seem well designed. The transparency
particularly of the district website and the efforts to support and recognize student gains in a district that has more than its share of challenges induced by poverty are to be commended.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	7

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The reform proposal seems reasonable in that the plan is methodical. In " Year 2 magnet themes will be added three elementary schools that are ready, and in Year 3 the remaining four elementary schools will become magnet-themed schools." Clearly the concern is what will be the quality of the scaling up? It is encouraging to read that the visual and performing arts magnet at Lake Hills was included in a national database by the National School Boards Association and Lake Hills "slated to receive a very prestigious award" and" other school districts regard MCAS as a model for innovative, positive change. The weak areas are a failure to describe how exactly the focus will be made on developing higher order thinking skills with the introduction of a more personalized technology driven curriculum. How do we show progress on the various standardized metrics that have been set out? What kind of professional development will work the best? So in terms of the development and illustration of a " high quaity learning plan" this proposal falls slightly short. However, it is clear that the grant reciepient has a strong track record of success in this department.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The district projects that performance on summative assessments will increase by 7% by the end of year
4 of the grant, as measured by the standardized assessments and that
Graduation rates are anticipated to increase by 7% by the end of year 4 of the 9
grant with College enrollment rates anticipated to increase by 7% by the end year 4 of
the grant. While achievement gaps are anticipated to narrow by 5% by the end of year
4 of the grant. I understand the need not to over promise but feel that these projections maybe slightly too
conservative and believe the grantee should hold themselves more accountable during the period of performance
to some results appearing at least by year 3 of the grant if not year 2.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has a good but not spectacular track record of success but as the LEA acknowledges it is from a low baseline.
Many of the LEAs students are seriously underperforming as the average is extremely low with only 56.6% passing language
arts in 2009 to 69% in 2011 and from 58.2% passing math in
2009 to 69% in 2011.   The LEA seems to have made great strides to improve transparency and has a commitment to making
parental communications more user friendly. Although it is not clear how easily parents with less expertise can move between
a number of websites containing demographic and test data at the school, district, neighboring districts and statewide level and
draw conclusions about their own students.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and
support staff, based on the U.S. Census Bureau's classification used in the F-33 survey of local
government finances (information on the survey can be found at (nces.ed.gov/ccd/f33agency.asp).
Personnel salaries for support staff are available at the district website under the human resources
link, where hourly rates are quoted for opened positions. Some non personnel expenses are not disclosed
without a freedom of information request.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has embraced personalized learning with a zeal that seems truly impressive. The LEA leadership over the past six
years has
created an environment to not just place new devices into the hands of the students but also to digitize large areas of their
curriculum and appropriately
equip their classrooms. They have also invested in a course wide management system in the form of Moodle and have been
assisted by a web based grade book that enables better communication with parents. Clearly they have demonstrated that
they have charted their own way in the area of
personalized learning helped by leadership from the state that has empowered them to integrate the key concepts throughout

the life of the schools, teachers, as well as the students' families as well as the students themselves.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	7

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The school district has developed several partnerships with outside groups most notably with the Open Door Clinic, which is a non-for-profit, located inside Michigan City High School, that handles the needs of more than 800 students per year. This latter group in return represents a community effort to address many adolescent mental health issues. Additionally, Purdue North Central and University of Chicago have for some years provided "ongoing, job-embedded professional development" for staff particularly involved with Algebra I instruction. It is not clear however how engaged these stakeholders have been in the development of the proposal which appears to have been developed internally with the assistance of area principals through its Building Leadership Team (BLT) process. There are only a few letters of support from the Purdue professor who has been involved with professional development efforts, the Open Door Clinic and the Mayors' office. It would have been helpful to have had some better input from parents and the business community and for letters of support to have reflected this.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The proposal excels in this category the the PLP by asking students such essential questions as"What are their hopes and dreams", "What strengths can they build upon?" the process helps to stimulate self directed learning. The regular review of such answers is key to success of the personalized learning that needs to become deeply integrated into the curriculum.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The LEA has examined its data and recognize that "Freshman year is pivotal " and that the LEA and that "historically Michigan City High School (MCHS) loses about a third of a class over the life of the cohort (approximately 150 students per class)."   So an important effort is to create a "Freshman Academy (within Michigan City High School) to support high needs and improve skills particularly the essential algebra and English and to promote college and career readiness (Career Class). There has been an upward trend in graduation rates at MCHS from 59.7% (277 students) in 2007 to 85% (335 students) in 2011. Also encouraging is that a percentage of MCAS graduates taking an AP exam nearly doubled from 2006 (14.8%) to 2011 (27.5%, nearly a third of graduates). The Magnet school structure allows for students to become more deeply involved in learning of more personal interest although it would be good to have seen some evidence of this Magnet schools. There is a wider appreciation it would seem in diverse cultures as the schools "also receive additional
resources invested in specialists in the content theme such as a science laboratory teacher or a world language instructor, to ensure that exposure to the theme is more than occasional, and that there is sufficient capacity to preserve rigor in the content theme." The academic content seems well geared to improving academic outcomes as the proposal aims to fund such well proven approaches as SpringBoard and AVID. The grant seems to be well timed as the school district is ready to make the critical investments in education that are now required for students to compete in the 21st century. AVID is a good program to assist students manage their learning and it is good to see the LEA take advantage of this. The district is also prepared to invest in critical training for teachers to use the AVID program to maximum effect to assist high need students. There is a question whether the district is over relying on AVID and whether there should be other strategies put in place in more of the feeder middle schools to address the needs of high need students.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The BLT process which was essentially a consensus seeking way of developing the plan that is developed in the proposal achieved 100 % agreement among the principals and it is well thought out and designed to achieve the goals particularly in the area and career preparation: stepped up dual credit options; (11) gifted programs and identifying and nurturing students with high potential; and expanding the safety net (AVID); The district has met the criteria under this heading in a number of ways. The district is implementing training for RISE evaluations for teachers and principals.   RISE, Indiana's model evaluation and development system is comprised of a system of domains and indicators that provide clear expectations of teachers and supports a fair and transparent evaluation of effectiveness. Additonally, at the beginning of each school year and at frequent intervals throughout the school year, the staff will assess each student's mastery of the skills, concepts, and standards identified for each grade level and subject area using the on-line assessment processes provided by AVID and SpringBoard programs. SpringBoard incorporates a range of options designed to measure student progress and inform teaching. Embedded Assessments offer performance-based measurements.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

There is a well organized approach -- the LEA manages the implementation through school leadership teams that reflect and review on information developed through the district's teacher evaluation system that helps school leaders and school leadership teams assess, and take steps to improve, individual and collective educator effectiveness and school culture and climate. Additonally a project director will be responsible for assisting in the implementation. An additional sign that this is a high quality application is that the leadership teams work with vendors to develop a dashboard-like student data point is in progress. The district will use data from the Acuity assessments.   Developed by the Indiana Department of Education, the assessment measures student knowledge and understanding and can be used to make informed decisions that help improve student achievement. The state has fully empowered its LEAs to operate a program such as the one proposed by the LEA. The Acuity assessments provide diagnostic measures for grade 3-8 students in English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, Algebra I, and English 10. Students with disabilities are well covered through the special education staffing and the AVID framework. It is not clear however how flexible budgeting will support the new personalized focus.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

With reference to (a)
The LEA and school infrastructure supports personalized learning by—

(a) Ensuring that all participating students (as defined in this notice), parents, educators (as defined in this notice), and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning), regardless of income, have access to necessary content, tools, and other learning resources both in and out of school to support the implementation of the applicant's proposal;

It is not clear how ready the LEA is to deliver content to all devices in students homes judging by the following:

" A citywide fiber project is in motion to continue to bring better access and wireless solutions to our students and faculty at home. As we progress through our district's technology plan to better our access. Our next step is to give students access to digital content when and where they need it" What does "progress through our district technology's plan" mean? Does that mean any coverage or some? This is vague. What is the timeline?

 In general, the support seems adequate with regards to "ensuring that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders (as appropriate and relevant to student learning) have appropriate levels of technical support, " however, because there are no real metrics provided concerning response time to questions so it is difficult to tell exactly the level of support that is actually granted. There is no reference to peer support or local support. There is a good integration into the technology provided the students and parentsw of the Personal Learning Plan System (PLP) through sophisticated interaction with the Learning Management System.

With reference to the use of integrated su pports such as electronic tutor supports, I could find no evidence of these. Nor could I find evidence that there was interoperability between the various data systems (human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data).

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	12

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Combing the Deming Total Quality Improvement approach and the efforts of an outside Evaluator the staff will follow a model of continuous quality improvement; however,there is less stress on corrective action. Will the community or any part of it be participating in deciding what corrrective action is taken
and what will be the expected outcomes of such action and the consequences if those outcomes are not reached?

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

There seems a lot more engagement with internal stakeholders than external ones such as parents and the community as a whole. This is because the meetings with the internal stakeholders seem regularly scheduled and are understandably more important since staff time is being devoted to them. However it would have been good to see how the LEA is moving beyond the business as usual to really communicate with the outside community and taking their input seriously.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The types of indicators used are not well described for the 4-8 population or clearly set out in the narrative so that for example for grades 4-8 --"All students will improve their English/Language Arts and Mathematics performance on the ISTEP+ tests by 6% per year if under 80% and by 3% per year is 80% and above."
Is not explained anywhere. Why is this a useful indicator--what is the rationale for the indicator used? The non cognitive indicator for grades 9-12-- Analysis of student attendance seems reasonable to use as an indicator but the low goals that are set seem unambitious and are not explained (1% (Year 1); 1% (Year 2); 1% (Year 3); 1% (Year 4).

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Tehre is a strong evaluative component to this grant proposal and the professional development is solidly integrated into the curriculum components rather than generic. For example, each year 4 teams of 8 teacher secondary teachers will travel to receive AVID related professional development. The district is planning for large changes to the school day as the school moves from 50 minute to 100 minute block scheduling and teachers receive appropriate professional development. The district will again appropriately "hire a curriculum/technology integration coach at each school to support ongoing, classroom-based professional development needs. At the same time MCAS teachers will participate in two-weeks of professional development in problem-based, technology-infused instructional strategies, and project and curriculum unit development time. During the school year, teachers will use daily ?team? time 6 and Professional Learning Community (PLC) time to continue project and unit development or to refine existing units. " The teachers will be awarded increases on the basis of improvements in their students' achievement scores using the RISE template.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	7

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Costs seem reasonable. Some better identification as to what kinds of supplies will be needed. The magnet project accounts for 76% of the personnel budget. an these dollars seem well invested in terms of supporting sustainability because the 18 teacher leaders (Technology & Theme Integration Specialists and the Community and Parent Outreach & Theme-based Support Specialists will help build staff capacity. Costs for the evaluator of $600,000 for four years seems excessive and would need to be examined more closely if this application was funded.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

It does not seem that there has been a great deal of consideration given to future support although there is evidence of some--for example--Indirect Costs – have been cut from the LEA's cost rate of 4.09%, to 1.5% done "with an eye to the future when costs must be assumed by
the district." There seems some willingness to reconfigure funds from different sources including Title I, Title II, Math Science Partnership Grant,
community partnerships, and the General Operating Fund. It would be good to have specified which community agencies to provide services for our students, and what grants and funding streams will support the program into the future.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**7**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools. In Year 2 magnet themes will be added three elementary schools that are ready, and in Year 3 the remaining four elementary schools will become magnet-themed schools; in Year 4 we will sustain and shore up these schools for transition to general fund. Additionally all participating educators engage in training, and in professional teams
or communities that supports their individual and collective capacity to: Support the effective implementation of personalized learning
environments and strategies that meet each student's academic needs and help ensure all students can graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

Parent involvement and decision making is not precisely included within the plan. While the Advisory Committee will discuss upcoming events and changes that need to be made in the program,parents are just "encouraged to participate in meetings, voice their opinions and ideas for the school, and participate in parent education activities." and provide their input in terms of periodic surveys. Their role as potential decision makers seems vague at best.
However there are serious intentions to engage parents (attend bi-annual parent-teacher conferences, topical meetings, district level
meetings such as the Superintendent's State of the Schools address,) and these are to be commended.

The goals seem ambitious yet achievable.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The proposal has set out an integrated and holistic account of how the entire school system will be transformed through a focus on personalized learning.

Total	210	170

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0795IN-2 for Michigan City Area Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	6

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Michigan City Area Schools proposes a comprehensive and seamless reform vision that is centered on restructuring the lowest performing middle schools and implementing a theme-based approach in seven of its elementary schools. The applicant articulates it will strengthen the alignment between the middle school mathematics curriculum to increase student achievement and college and career readiness, modify the school schedule to deepen student learning, enhance teacher effectiveness through high quality professional development focused on project-based learning and technology integration, and improve productivity through the expanded use of digital technology.

It would have been helpful to the reviewer if the applicant would have articulated the relationship between the use of technology and implementing the magnet school options that results in stronger student engagement and prepares students for careers and college.

The applicant did not address in its vision how it would use data systems to measure student growth and success to inform teachers and principals about how to improve instruction. The applicant also did not address how it would utilize technology and the magnet theme schools to recruit, reward, and retain teachers and principals in the lowest-achieving schools.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's school selection criteria were based on the grant guidelines. The 13 schools selected met the eligibility criteria based on low-income levels and low performance as evidenced by state assessments. The total number of participants to be served by this grant project is 6,107 K-12 students.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to scale the project in years two, three, and four at schools that currently are not magnet theme schools, however, the narrative lacks specificity as related to inputs, outputs, and outcomes. Providing this information would have strengthened the applicant's response to scale up.

The Springboard English Language Arts program will be expended to support instruction in grades 6-10.

The applicant also cites excerpts from Daniel Pink's book, Drive, but the reviewer is unclear of the relationship between the citation and the outcomes of the project.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's vision to enhance technology tools and resources as well as transform traditional schools to a magnet-themed model appears likely to result in improved student learning and performance. The designation of each middle school having a different theme increases the chances of equity, access, and personalized learning. The applicant has identified its system wide goals for student outcomes to include a 7% increase on summative assessments, decrease achievement gaps by 5% by the end of the grant period, increase graduation rates by 7% by the end of year 4, and increase college enrollment by 7% by the end of the grant.

The reviewer was not able to determine other subgroups becuase only two were referenced in the proposal. Also, there was no justification given for the identified performance measures.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	8

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

For the past two years the applicant has made AYP and also made increases on its state assessment scores. Language Arts scores increased from 56.6 passing in 2009 from 69% in 2011 and from 58.2 passing math in 2009 to 69% in 2011.

The applicant provides data on the passing trends for the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Program-Plus (ISTEP). The data indicates an increase in passing scores from 2008 at 50.7% to 2012 60.3% passing. The applicant also provides data on end of course assessments for 2009-2011. There was an increase in the passing rate from 36.7% in 2010 to 51.6%. However, the reviewer did note that data was not provided for the years prior to 2009.

A review of Table 3 shows the four-year cohort graduation rates increased from 59.7 in 2007 to 85% in 2011. The applicant also provides further evidence of its ability to advance student achievement through the number of graduates taking the Advanced Placement exams. The scores increased from 14.8% in 2006 to 27.5 in 2011

Figure 1 is unclear as the reviewer was not able to determine who the "majority and minority" refers to regarding student enrollment. A chart depicting students by ethnicity would have been helpful for the reviewer to determine equity and access.

In addition, the tables and charts do not provide any written information related to the analysis of the data which would have been helpful to the reviewer in understanding the intent of the applicant. This was particularly important because the page numbers in the written narrative of the proposal did not match the page number in the appendices.

The applicant assures that it makes data accessible to student's parents and educators through a range of resource options. The district's website provides access to learning and instructional curriculum, the Parent Access link, student achievement data, attendance and graduation rates, and other student data such as diversity. The applicant also broadcast its School Board meetings and parents are invited to participate in conferences and other meetings.

The applicant's narrative in this section could have been strengthened if data related to closing the achievement gaps among subgroups were presented in charts or graphs. While the applicant provides descriptive informative on overall academic achievement for the school district, the reviewer was unable to determine the increases for the three of the four schools referenced in the narrative.

There is also no reference to significant reforms that have been implicated in the persistently lowest achieving schools referred to in the narrative.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant attests to a high level of transparency and makes public K-12 school level expenditures related to instruction, instructional support, pupil support, and school administration. The applicant's website provides access to information related to the district and schools' data as well as provides links to both the state's Department of Education website and provides access to the states website and dashboard website.

The applicant's narrative adequately provides a description to which it makes available the four categories of school-level expenditures from State and local funds. For example, the applicant makes available information on administrator contracts. Salary and expenditure information is available on request through the Freedom of Information Act. The school district's website provides a link to information on personnel salaries for support staff. Staff salary schedules are also posted on the district website as well as the substitute teacher salary schedule. School budgetary and expenditure information are contained in board meeting minutes.

The applicant does not provide specific information related to pesonnel benefits.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	**10**	**10**

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The State has implemented an aggressive reform agenda that is built on three major pillars: School Choice, Accountability, and Educator Effectiveness. The state superintendent has implanted an aggressive school voucher program enabling students to attend private and religious schools. Students are also free to enroll across district boundaries based on preference with funding following them t their new schools. The state has also expanded the number of charter schools.

The state also received a No Child Left Behind waiver which enables the state to implement a single accountability system. In addition, the state has contracted out eight schools that were persistently identified as low performing in an effort to personalize learning.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	**10**	**6**

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's attempt to engage stakeholder engagement and support began with the creation of building leadership teams. The Superintendent presented the plan to the school leadership team over a period of months through open dialogue where the plan was reviewed and feedback provided. All principals in the district approved the plan. The building principals presented the plan to their teachers, staff, parents and community through a series of meetings.

While the applicant states each building leadership team utilizes the consensus method to develop a plan to increase parent support for student learning, it is unclear if parents and students were involved in the writing of the proposal.

A review of the appendices indicates the applicant has received letters of support from key stakeholders such as the mayor and local partners to include a university and a community health provider. The applicant's proposal could have been strengthened by providing letters of support from parent organizations, business community partners, civic organizations, and other institutions of higher learning.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	**5**	**3**

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to implement a personalized learning plan for every student and provides descriptive information related to the goals of choosing the plan, however, the applicant does not provide an analysis of its current status and the logic behind the need to restructure its schools.

The applicant makes reference to the growth model that calculates each student's progress, or growth on state assessments, but did not provide any data need to suport the need for a personalized learning environment.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	**20**	**16**

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has clearly articulated its plan for improving learning and teaching through the identification of several strategies to include establishing and expanding advance placement courses, offering dual credit courses, and implementing the AVID

program.

To ensure students understand what they are learning every student will have a Personalized learning Plan that asks students questions such as, what is important to them? What are their goals, dreams, and hopes? What strengths they can build upon? The personal learning plan introduces planning principles using SMART goals.

Students, teachers and parents collaborate in the plan's development, implementation and review. The plan also helps student and parents identify extra learning opportunities. Progress is reviewed quarterly and if necessary, revisions are made to the learning goals. The plan is used to support the transition at each level of education.

The applicant also proposes to implement magnet-themed schools to afford students the opportunity to experience deep learning experiences. Each school will adopt a theme and concentrate instructional efforts on creating linkages to the theme across the curriculum. The magnet schools will also receive additional resources such as a science laboratory teacher or a world language instruction to preserve academic rigor in the content theme.

The applicant plans to implement a Springboard program based on skills and standards of AP English which is a college level course. The AVID program has a strong college and career readiness component. All Freshman Academy students will participate in AVID to develop study skills, critical thinking, and receive academic from peers and college tutors, and participate in enrichment and motivational activities.

To ensure that each student is able to achieve his or her goals the district is introducing a freshman transition program using the Career Choices curriculum to broaden student's ideas about their own potential and to educate them about the planning needed to obtain a rewarding career.

To address the need for high quality instructional environments the applicant opened two elementary magnet schools that are engaging students through STEM education. The middle school programs are built around specific themes in Environmental Science and Cultural Arts. The applicant also plans to add a Sprint one-to-one solution and students will use the devices to access the curriculum.

Ongoing and regular feedback to assess each student's mastery of skills, concepts, and standards identified for each grade level and subject areas will be accessed through the on-line assessment process provided by AVID and Springboard programs. However, there is no reference to how the review of this data will inform instructional and programmatic changes.

To accommodate high needs students the applicant assures each student will receive an individual education plan that personalizes his/her instructional programs. Students will also have access to AVID coaching, mentoring and online support.

The applicant will provide training videos on the school network to allow students to solve problems without interruption. However, the applicant does not specify how the students will be trained on devices that they will take home.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	14

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

To support the effective implementation of personalized learning environments the applicant is working with university partners to develop and implement standards-based mathematics instruction to strengthen the math program. Teachers will be trained in math content areas, in classroom coaching will be provided, and the math curriculum will be aligned with the states common core standards, Math teachers in grade 4-7 will participate in professional development that focuses on algebra to provide teachers with the knowledge and skills to develop students' algebraic reasoning. Mathematics faculty at the middle school and high school algebra faculty will collaborate with current university partner to align the curriculum scope and sequence for grades 6 to 9.

The magnet and magnet-themed schools learning environments provides opportunities for students to engage in common and individual tasks. Through the AVID program students are provided with learning approaches such as the Socratic seminar individual research programs, role playing. The Springboard programs addresses students academic needs and interest through such activities as responding to a piece of art, a film clip visual media or listening to a piece of music.

The applicant proposes to use on-line assessment processes to monitor student progress and to inform teaching. However, the applicant failed to specify how the data will be used to accelerate instruction, and inform teacher content and pedagogy needs to improve individual and collective practice.

The applicant is currently implementing a new evaluation system for both teachers and principals. The system is comprised of a domains and indicators that set clear expectations. This section of the application could have been strengthened by providing information with regard to how often teachers are observed throughout the year. In doing so, the reviewer would have been able to determine the frequency of feedback given on individual and collective effectiveness.

The applicant will implement vertical teams who meet weekly in professional learning communities to discuss curriculum, instruction, assessment, best practices, and course expectations. However, the narrative lacks specificity on how the teachers would use the new enhanced technology tools to engage all students as well as how the data would be used to identify optimal approached to learning that respond to the individual academic needs and interest.

The applicant proposes to utilize the digital resources of the Springboard and AVID program. The Springboard program will assist teachers in matching state standards with AP requirement and teachers will back map from 12th grade to6th to ensure students have the skills needed for college success. AVID will provide teacher training materials and on-line produces that will be used in the project.

The applicant relies on tools that are built into the software program that enables determination of students needs. However, there is no evidence of building the teacher's capacity to analyze student data. The assessment process begins at the beginning of each school year and continues at frequent intervals throughout the year with the staff assessing each student's mastery of the skills, concepts, and standards. It would have been helpful to the reviewer if the applicant would have stated how often assessment data is reviewed. In doing so, the effectiveness of the professional learning communities would have been clear.

The applicant through the establishment of building leadership teams has created a structure to improve school culture and learning. The structure provides a process for developing the school improvement plan which addresses student's academic needs.

The applicant utilizes information from observations of teachers and the use and analysis of student learning measures to identify teachers' strengths and development needs. However, the applicant does not address how this information is used to take steps to improve the overall academic program, the school culture, and climate for the purpose of continuous improvement.

The applicant identifies training programs such as building leadership teams, professional learning communities, and school improvement plans as avenues to continuously improve school progress, but the examples cited are actually practices and systems. The applicant also believes training to be funded by the grant for AVID, Math, SpringBoard and Technology will assist in increasing student performance and closing achievement gaps.

To address the need to ensure the number of students who receive instruction from highly effective teachers, the applicant will train English, mathematics, science, and special education teachers to increase their knowledge of subject area content as well as their knowledge of educational pedagogy and instructional skills. Professional development for administrators include a five day summer training.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	10

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant sufficiently describes its practices, policies, and rules that facilitate personalized learning by organizing the 400 full time personnel within 14 schools. Support is also provided from an administrative office, a transportation building and a plant planning facility. The applicant clearly articulates the governance structure and the roles and responsibilities of key staff involved with the project.

While the applicant describes how the project director will work directly with the building principals who are responsible for the operation of the program, it does not address affording school leadership teams with sufficient autonomy over factors such as school schedules, calendars, staffing models, etc.

The district has implemented online credit recovery courses for students who previously failed as well as an after school program for students needing additional support toward mastery of learning. Students also have access to books online to move ahead and the Springboard program provides online access to textbook content.

The applicant has identified several tools that track student mastery including state test and benchmarks. However, the emphases in this section of the narrative is focused on tracking assessments and not on ensuring students are given multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of content. The applicant could have made this section stronger by discussing alternative ways that students can demonstrate mastery of the content.

The district ensures that its curricula materials have been adapted to meet the needs of all students. A mathematics publisher

that the district has contracted with developed a differentiated handbook for special needs students. Instructional practices that adaptable to ensure access to all students include extending the amount of time for instruction, providing after-school or summer programs to increase instructional time and to train teachers on a variety of instructional practices to reach a greater number of students.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	10

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant assures all stakeholders have access to district information granted they can get to a community library where computers are available. The district sponsors community activities such as open house for families, curriculum support nights for Math, Reading, and Technology. Parents are encouraged to serve as members of the building leadership team.

To ensure that students, parents, educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support the district's eight technology personnel provide to the schools as needed. A Personal Plan Portal has been developed to grant access to students and parents from home to district resources and manage the students' educational career. The district is also in the process of developing "My Data Button" a solution that gives process easy access to their data.

The applicant assures that it has an Open Account Provisioning system in placed whereby staff has access to HR information for payroll and certification, e-mail, computer log-in, and student management accounts.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to utilize a process referred to as "Plan Do, Study, and Act to monitor, measure, and share information on the project. Leading indicators will be used to determine whether the project is making progress toward its objectives. In the event progress is not being made, the applicant assures project management staff working with school-based personnel will provide supportive actions to ensure that continuous progress is achieved.

The Superintendent will also provide parents, community members, and stakeholders with Annual project reports, grant updates and highlights, and formative and summative evaluation results at scheduled school and community meetings, through press releases, newsletters, school Board meetings, and online through the district's website.

To measure the effectives of the project the applicant will develop a student survey, parent survey and teacher survey to measure program outcomes. The applicant will also conduct interviews with focus groups consisting of school and district personnel regarding the implementation of the evaluation plan.

The project evaluator will create a series of formative and summative reports. Formative evaluations will occur on a regular basis, with findings used to guide program improvements. The formative evaluation results will be presented to administrative, school, and district staff at the conclusion of each school year. The report will also include recommendations for improvements based on a review of the data. A total of four formative evaluation reports will be generated over the course of the funding cycle.

While the applicant proposes to implement the "Plan, Do, Study, Act strategy to monitor the effectiveness of the project, the narrative lacks specificity as to how often this process will take place and who will be involved . The creation of a committee consisting of all stakeholders would ensure continuous engagement of all parties.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	3

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders include regularly scheduling meetings with the vendors to discuss the professional development schedules, agenda, and supporting materials and activities of the grant. Teachers will participate in required trainings. Principals and teachers will also participate in all regularly

schedule leadership team meetings, school improvement meetings, and professional learning communities meeting to discuss grant implement and way to incorporate the project goals and activities

The applicant does not address how it will keep parents and families informed tthroughout the grant period.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified 14 performance measures, by subgroups with annual targets and has provided the rationale for selecting the measures. The applicant states data will be collected and analyzed on an annual basis with recommended changes communicated to the district superintendent and leaders.

The applicant does not provide previous baseline data.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to measure the effectiveness of the project through specific benchmarks that will monitor progress toward specific objectives and outcome measures to assess the impact on teaching and learning. Evaluation reports will be both summative and formative. The applicant has also created a timeline that outlines the tasks that are necessary for attainment of the project to be accomplished within the four year period. The applicant has also created an implementation plan for the project to include the persons responsible for ensuring that the milestones are accomplished and completed on time. If the project is not adhering to the timelines, the project director and district administrators have authority to modify the project policies and activities to ensure all of the objectives are met.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has identified all funds that will support the project to include in-kind contributions and grant funding. Most of the costs associated with the project appear to be reasonable to support development and implementation; however, the costs associated with evaluating the project seem to be inconsistent with the rates established for carrying out this type of work.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**5**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant does not provide a high quality plan for sustainability of the project goals after the grant. The reviewer noted that funding for the Science grant ends this year and no plans were articulated to pursue continued funding for this project. The applicant also relies upon Title I and Title II funds for this project, however, there is no guarantee that these funds can be relied upon in the future. It is recommended that the applicant devise a plan for funding beyond the grant period.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**10**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to continue to offer adolescent health services to its high school students with the focused on 9th grade Academy Students. The health center has been in operation for 15 years and offers many programs geared toward

preserving the health of adolescents, such as prenatal support, substance abuse programs, depressions, and anxiety counseling as well as basic health screenings.

The applicant has selected two desired outcomes for students; increased attendance and increased access to mental health supports leading to fewer discipline referrals. In order to track the results of the selected indicators, an Academy Director and an Attendance Specialist will be hired through the SIG grant. The data will be analyzed and targeted resources will focus on high needs 9th grade academy freshmen. The applicant plans to scale the project by utilizing the data to provide intervention services to other students through the RTI process. The goal is for 100% of the academy students to meet academic proficiency standards, attendance standard, and to graduate on time prepared for college and careers.

The applicant suggests that the partner will collaborate with the school's counseling staff to provide additional training and support. The Academy Director, leadership team, and principal will work with the health center's staff to determine the needs of the 9th grade academy and the entire high school population.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the narrative, the applciant has addressed how it will create learning enviornments that are designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college and career ready standards.

Total	210	152

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0795IN-3 for Michigan City Area Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision

The Michigan City Area Schools (MCAS) articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision.

The applicant has set forth a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas.

Adapting Standards and Assessments:
The applicant supports college and career readiness standards and assessments through the development, implementation, and monitoring of a rich, integrated and rigorous curriculum based each school's magnet theme. Additionally, the applicant articulates vision through increased student motivation through: Autonomy , Mastery, and Purpose.

Building Data Systems: The applicant provides support for building data systems by monitoring and enhance data systems to improve teacher effectiveness.

Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers, principals: The applicant states "goal three" to be enhancing teacher effectiveness with the use of quality professional development and the addition of a curriculum coach for each school. Training and developing will be ongoing and embedded.

Turning Around Lowest-Achieving Schools: In focus of this reform MCAS shares a sounds and unique high quality plan for turning around the lowest achieving Middle Schools through the use of transformation into theme based magnet schools: Barker Middle School will become the Barker Center for Technology and Engineering. Krueger Middle School will become the Krueger Center for Environmental Studies. Elston Middle School will become the Elston Cultural Center for the Arts. The district's proposal is for seven of the existing elementary schools to take on a theme. The applicant presents sounds research for the manner in which magnet schools have been found to increase student achievement, student motivation and satisfaction with school; teacher motivation and morale; and parent satisfaction with the school (Blank, 1989; Crain et al., 1992; Gamoran, 1996; Heebner, 1995; Metz, 1986; Musumecci & Szczypkowski, 1991) as well as more recent studies (Ballou, Goldring and Liu, 2006; Cullen, Jacobs and Lewitz, 2003; Institute for the Education Sciences, 2005 among others), generally finding that magnet school performance results were mixed but that they also had a significant effect on both student and teacher motivation and interest and were instrumental in increasing parental satisfaction.

Additional components of the plan substantiate a clear and credible approach to the goals.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation

(a) The applicant has convincing rational for selecting schools: criteria schools with low-income levels and low performance as evidenced by achievement testing results. Because poverty rate exceeds 71% across the district and to develop a comprehensive program all schools in the district were selected. The process demonstrates that participating schools collectively meet the eligibility requirements.

(b) The applicant provides a list of the schools that will participate. The applicant includes all schools in the district. This approach is logical because the overall size of the LEA allows broad implementation with systemic district wide reform practices that apply to all schools and students at a given level.

(c) The applicant lists 6,107 students in grades K-12. The applicant lists participating students from low-income families, high-need students, and participating educators. This data is included in the Appendix in data tables.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	5

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change
The extent to which the application includes a high-quality plan describing how the reform proposal will be scaled up and translated into meaningful reform to support district-wide change beyond the participating schools, and will help the applicant reach its outcome goals.

The Middle Schools will become magnet schools in year one and then reform will be scaled up by reforming all seven elementary schools over the next two years. The applicant is sound in the reform plan utilizing all teachers for professional development in problem based learning and technology tools.

The applicant demonstrates a high-quality plan by starting in Middle School where reform needs to improve and building on the foundation of solid past improvement in the primary grades. The reform will then be scaled down to elementary levels with a magnet themed school model.

The applicant does support LEA reform through the SpringBoard English and Language Arts program to support expanded instruction in grades 6 to 10 and eventually adding grades 11 and 12. The applicant does have limited evidence to describe the manner in which reform can be scaled up to the high school through Problem Based Learning and the magnet themed schools.

Outcomes and goals include:
Goal One — Increase academic achievement in the MCAS middle schools, elementary schools, and high school.
Goal Two – Improve productivity through the expanded use of digital educational resources and modification of the school schedule.
Goal Three – Enhance teacher effectiveness

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	3

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes

The applicant's plan for LEA-wide goals for improved outcomes demonstrates moderate evidence to improve performance and increase equity. As noted below the applicant does not include all sub-groups, has no data or ongoing data collection plan for college enrollment rates and postsecondary degree attainment, is not ambitious in increasing graduation rates, and includes no dynamic growth measures in this goal area.

(a) Performance on summative assessments (proficiency status and growth).
The applicant lists:

- Schools with 80% or above during 2011-12 will increase student performance by 3% on the ISTEP+ (Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress Plus) English/Language Arts test and for math the increase will be by 6% annually.
- Michigan City High School will increase the % of students who pass the English 10 ECA and the Algebra 1 ECA.

The applicant does not list data sets for all sub groups in each subject area. No data is present for sub-groups (Asian, Hispanic, Free or Reduced Price Meals, or Limited English Proficient Students). The lack of this sub-group data is not justified or addressed by the applicant in the proposal.

(b) Decreasing achievement gaps
The applicant uses the a flat metric to determine success; namely reducing the percentage of non-proficient students. The applicant demonstrates no intention for utilizing dynamic growth measures such as Value Added data to encourage differentiated growth for students already reaching proficiency or to measure the extent to which sub-groups are progressing or regressing toward or away from the proficiency target. Utilizing a growth metric in this manner would be beneficial because it would illuminate progress in relation to sub-groups and encourage student growth beyond the target of proficiency. The proposed methodology for determining growth based solely on changes in achievement levels (namely reducing the percentage of non-proficient students by stated targets of percentage per year) is an insufficient methodology.

(c) Graduation rates
The applicant sets a goal for high school graduation rate to increase 1% annually. This goal is achievable, but it is not ambitious. An ambitious goal would be double the rate of increase for a target of 96% graduation over the cycle of the grant as opposed to 91% graduation rate targeted by the applicant. Additionally the applicant is lacking in this data set as well since graduation rates and targets are not broken down into sub-groups.

(d) College enrollment rates and (e) Postsecondary degree attainment.
The applicant states that they do not keep data for college enrollment rates of for postsecondary degree attainment.

Therefore the applicant does not list goals for improvement in these areas. The applicant does not provide for a future plan for collecting data in these areas and for this reason it is not a high-quality plan

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success

MCAS provides data to support that stressors and challenges have increased with the demographics: increase high-poverty by 10% to a total of 71.7% in 2012 and high unemployment by families as well as high percentage of single-parent homes. Yet MCAS has demonstrated increase in achievement: 56% to 69% in language arts over a two year period and 58% to 69% in math during the same time frame. They also state that they improve to meet the requirements of AYP in 2011.

(a) The applicant demonstrates spare data to ensure improve student learning outcomes and close achievement gaps along all sub-groups. The applicant does not list data sets for all sub groups in each subject area. No data is present for sub-groups (Asian, Hispanic, Free or Reduced Price Meals, or Limited English Proficient Students). The applicant provides a table to demonstrate the enrollment between minority and majority students, but the applicant fails to provide data about those sub-groups on achievement.

(b) The applicant demonstrates ambitious and significant reforms in its persistently lowest-achieving schools. For example MCAS details an intense focus in the instructional core with the innovation of two magnet programs in STEM and the Arts at the elementary level as well as career and technical programming. The applicant describes the district as "on the move". This attitude is also quantified by two of their school being recognized for high-achievement growth by the state of Indiana as 2 of the top 15 schools using Indiana's Growth Model.

(c) MCAS demonstrates evidence showing student performance data available to students, educators, and parents in ways that inform and improve participation, instruction, and services. For example:

- posted achievement data on school website
- provides link to Indiana Department of Education website and "dashboard website" that links school achievement data for the district
- School Board meetings are broadcast on a local TV channel
- Link to parent access for student learning and explained at parent teacher conferences

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	2

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.

The applicant is lacking in areas to report salaries and benefits as noted below. The applicant is lacking in descriptions of additional process and practices that demonstrate transparency with investments. The applicant has some minimal reporting of basic financials, but demonstrates insufficient transparency in regards to the scope as defined in this notice.

a) The applicant does not provide actual personnel salaries and benefit costs for employees on school or district websites. The applicant does state that they provide hourly rates quoted for open positions under the human resources area, but not

actual salaries and benefit costs for employees.

b) The applicant states that personnel salaries are available on the district website, but does not address benefit cost for employees. This data is lacking and contributes to less transparency.

c) The applicant states that teacher salaries are available on the district website, but does not address benefit cost for employees. This data is lacking and contributes to less transparency.

d) The applicant states that actual non-personnel expenditures and the school level and school budgetary expenses are contained in school board minutes. Complete budgets, most recent audits, retirement costs, and administrative costs are not addressed by the applicant and are lacking as a process for transparency.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

B3 - State context for implementation

The applicant, MCAS describes the reform context with the state of Indiana as one of the most aggressive reform agendas in the nation built on three key levers: School Choice, Accountability, and Educator Effectiveness.

MCAS describes the funded model in Indiana tied closely to student enrollment. It explains the challenges in which vouchers have removed revenue as students have left MCAS and gone to charter schools. This compelling motivation for both school leaders and educators to embrace local reform as a vital aspect of long-term sustainability.

The state also includes reform for accountability with aspects of year to year growth and college and career readiness indicators.

MCAS also describes a state evaluation system for teachers based on teacher performance. Another convincing reform proposal for the teacher evaluation system is the inclusion of professional contributions and leadership tied to teacher evaluation. This condition supports MCAS reform efforts.

MCAS provides support for reform in noted extensive consultation with the Indiana Department of Education regarding this proposal as it relates to compliance with state reform.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	4

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support

(a) The applicant does demonstrate a comprehensive process of review and revision through a structured process of continuous improvement process applied through school based teams and led through a central office team by the school superintendent. The BLT (Building Leadership Teams) are led by the building principal and include school personnel. There is follow up reporting and engagement to parents and families. The process utilizes SMART goals and is a sound and comprehensive process for school improvement.

(i) For LEAs with collective bargaining representation, evidence of direct engagement and support for the proposals from teachers in participating schools. MCAS does not define whether the district has collective bargaining or not. The applicant does not review the process for direct engagement with bargaining unit.

(b) Letters of support from such key stakeholders:
The applicant provides three letters: one from the Mayor of Michigan City, another from a professor at Purdue University, and finally one letter from Open Door Adolescent Health Center. There are no letters from parents or parent organizations. No supporting letters from student organizations, nor early learning programs. No

letters of support from the business community, advocacy groups, local civic or community-based organizations. The inclusion of three letters supports the process of community engagement, but the lack of letters from various stakeholders as noted above is evidence that demonstrates a limited process of review.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	1

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps

The applicant references a "district Strategic Plan" that explains "all students will achieve a personal learning plan" and stares that this plan "puts in place processes and learning opportunities to ensure that each student progressively creates and achieves his or her personal learning plan." The applicant does not explain how or to what degree the LEA will "put in place processes to ensure." This lack of detail does not support a high quality plan.

The applicant addresses aspects and components of a Personalized Learning Environment such as a framework and student questionnaire that asks: who am I, where am I going, and how am I doing and as well as a asking teachers to identify student needs as part of the plan. The applicant lacks a high quality plan that addresses the fidelity and details of implementation. The applicant is vague about the the logic behind the reform proposal and is unclear about how to achieve or implement the Personalized Learning Environment.

The applicant is confusing about the implementation through parent engagement for example the applicant states that, "In order for this project to be successful, parents must be involved and supportive of their students' academic achievement and college attendance goals." Then goes on to say that, "No Child Left Behind legislation requires parents have access to a substantial amount of information regarding the achievement of their children, the quality of the school's teachers, and a detailed report card on their schools and districts." The applicant bases the implementation logic on No Child Left Behind legislation and yet the applicant also states that Indiana has achieved a waiver from NCLB.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	15

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(C)(1) Learning

The applicant Michigan City Area Schools (MCAS) supports an approach to learning that engages and empowers learners. MCAS is bases the approach (AVID Advancement Via Individual Determination) on research (Mehan, 1996; Guthrie, 2001).

(a) With the support of parents and educators, all students—

(i) The applicant provides evidence and states that parent involvement is key to a students success and supports that by "discussing upcoming events" and encouraging parents to "participate in meetings, voice their opinions and ideas for the school, and participate in parent education activities." The applicant does include parents in the process of the Personalize Learning Plan through a Personalized Parent Plan asking aligned questions.

(ii) The applicant does identify learning and development goals linked to college and career readiness standards through the College Board and AVID programs. With additional support include the PLP, that requires the student to reflect on and plan strategies for college and career.

(iii) The applicant does demonstrate the manner in which students will be involved in deep learning experiences in areas

of academic interests. For example: magnet and magnet-themed schools offer innovative learning environments and a theme-based approach to learning. The applicant provides additional logic to this end by stating that programs such as SpringBoard, AVID, and Math/Algebra I provide a rigorous curriculum that involves students in deeper and more meaningful learning.

(iv) The applicant does demonstrate the manner in which students will have access and exposure to diverse of backgrounds within the school district. For example SpringBoard includes rich literature reflective of culturally diverse themes and authors such as Chung Tzu, Washington Irving, Sandra Cisneros, James Baldwin, Walter Dean Myers, Zora Neale Hurston, Shakespeare, Jataka, and Langston Hughes.

(v) The applicant does demonstrate the manner in which students will master critical academic content and develop goal-setting as evidenced through "skill building, leadership and character development. The applicant describes academic programs such as SpringBoard and Textual Power promote and develop the critical thinking skills, content knowledge, and study habits needed for successful participation in AP courses, Dual Credit courses, and college and career readiness.

(b)
(i) The applicant demonstrates a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development through a series of college and career readiness programs:

- freshman transition program using the Career Choices curriculum
- AVID program being introduced at grades 6-12
- enrichment and motivational activities and online test preparation programs for the SAT, PSAT, ACT, and PLAN
- PLP program at grades kindergarten through 12.

This series of programs are logical and supportive for college and career readiness preparation.

(ii) The applicant demonstrates a variety of high-quality instructional approaches through the implementation of magnet themed schools which provide an approach for high-quality learning environments and additional programs that engage students such as SpringBoard.

(iii) The applicant suggests high-quality content and digital learning through a 1:1 technology platform, but lacks details to support a high quality plan for 1:1 technology. For example the applicant states "The district are interested in adding a sprint one-to-one solution as part of the grant. The district are interested in this solution for grades 4-12." Narratives in this section from the applicant suggest a lack of implementation and engagement around the planning and details for 1:1 technology as it relates to improving learning and teaching through a personalized learning environment.

(iv)

(A) The applicant states that they will utilize AVID and SpringBoard to assess those programs. The applicant also describes unit assessments and self-assessments to provide evidence of students' learning.   These approaches do not constitute the manner in which data will be collected, analyzed, and acted upon. There is no comprehensive overarching plan for assessments with data system integration.

(B) The applicant defines current practice: data from the Acuity assessments to make informed decisions to improve student achievement. The applicant does not propose any additional measures or processes recommendations based on increasing the personalized learning environment.

(v) The applicant articulates mechanisms of support and training for high-need students such as AVID and SpringBoard as note above. The applicant articulates research to support that both programs specifically address high need students. The research and the process is convincing because it demonstrates how writing, inquiry, collaboration, reading skills are integrated into learning in math and science classrooms to support non-English speakers.

(c) The applicant demonstrates support for mechanisms that provide training, tools, and resources for students to track their own learning. For example, Personal Learning Programs link both long- and short-term goals, build on student strengths, address obstacles, and develop capabilities. As the applicant states, " students learn from the past and plan for the future." This cycle of formative ongoing assessment with feedback provides access and support for students to improve. The applicant also explains access and engagement to this system for students as a social media interface to increase student relevance.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	13

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

C)(2) Teaching and Leading:

The narratives for the section of the application contain overviews of the current professional development structures

A. Educators Engaged in Training and Professional Team or Communities to Support:

(i) The applicant will implement a series of math initiative and programs that include a high quality plan for professional development with teachers. MCAS will also implement a series of high quality instructional programs that articulate a K-12 approach for preparing students for college and career readiness for example: AVID as well as: SAT, PSAT, ACT, and PLAN. Additionally MCAS will implement PLPs (personalized learning plans) for all students.

(ii) The applicant does the implementation of magnet and magnet-themed schools. The nature of these programs and school reforms provide evidence content and instruction that is engaging students in individual and common tasks: problem based learning and collaborative work

(iii) The applicant does suggests the frequent measures of student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards through AVID and SpringBoard, but does not address systemic measures for progress in many core academic subjects. Nor is the plan comprehensive in scope to address a K-12 articulation.

(iv) The applicant summarizes an evaluation system that represents a high quality plan. The new state reform implements an evaluation system: RISE is to develop educators' communication skills and ability to identify and discuss evidence of student learning. This evidence is based on observations of teacher practice and the use and analysis of student learning measures. The applicant states that RISE relies on multiple data sources to portray a fair, accurate, and comprehensive picture of a teacher's performance. This teacher feedback supports a high quality plan.

B. Systems:
(i) The applicant addresses training and support for vertical alignment teams that provide ongoing support and feedback. The applicant offers a professional development plan for teachers and administrators. This is a moderate plan and does not contain details about which instructional strategies nor the nature of the work that teams specifically will complete. This plan is not convincing.

(ii) The applicant addresses support for high-quality learning resources and content through both SpringBoard and AVID. These tools are insufficient for meeting the requirements to provide tools to create and share new resources. The applicant does not provide evidence for a comprehensive LMS (Learning Management System.)

(iii) The applicant demonstrates provides some evidence to support a high quality plan for process and tools to match student needs with specific resources such as AVID and SpringBoard, yet the applicant is lacking in a comprehensive approach that meets all grade levels and all content areas.

C. Leaders and Leadership Teams:

(i) The applicant establishes a process for continuous improvement through BLT (Building Leadership Teams) and then describes a process for BLTs to evaluate student data. MCAS also articulates an evaluation system, RISE which provides meaningful teacher feedback and promotes areas of improvement. The applicant does not link these two concepts. For example global feedback on RISE should be reviewed and analyzed by BLTs to provide meaningful steps to collectively improve educator effectiveness.

(ii) The applicant lists some professional development structures. The applicant does provide additional professional development to support college and career readiness through two programs: SpringBoard and AVID. The applicant does not provide a framework to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the professional develop and as a result these become let effective initiatives with no assurance through a high quality plan. For example these initiatives do not include classroom walk through or systemic checks for fidelity that inform practice and reform efforts.

D. Effective Teacher and Principals in Hard to Staff Schools and Subjects.

The applicant lists that all teachers in the target schools currently meet the Indiana educator effectiveness: highly effective teacher requirements. The applicant does not define highly effective principals. The applicant does not include a high-quality plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from high quality teachers and principals. The applicant does not specifically address how to increase the number of "highly effective" teachers in hard-to-staff schools or subjects.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	9

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(1) LEA Practices, Policies, and Rules

(a) The applicant provides an overview of current district leadership and senior staff. MCAS will provide for a Project Director to oversee day to day activities with this grant with high quality job requirements. The Project Director along with Central Office staff will provide support and accountability for implementation with the grant.

(b) The applicant provides for a logical leadership and support structure at each school. Technology and Theme Integration Specialist, AVID coaches, and Site Coordinators will work with each school principal to support reform. It is unclear if there is a site coordinator and AVID coach for each building or one for just the district. The applicant does not directly address individual school flexibility and autonomy autonomy over factors: school schedules, calendars, personnel decisions, staff models, roles for educators, and budgets,

(c) Giving students to progress through mastery not amount of time on topic and;
The applicant provides a specific option to demonstrate mastery through online recovery courses for students who have previously failed and also states that they offer an an after school program for mastery of learning as well as Cafe Read-a-Latte a tutoring venue for students. Evidence is sparse to support the scope and effect of these programs. The applicant does not propose reform to address mastery over seat time in the general classroom.

(d) Giving students opportunity to demonstrate mastery at multiple times and multiple ways.
The applicant addresses a number of progress monitoring assessments as well as state supported assessment systems. They highlight "Acuity" which assesses all subjects at grades 3-8 for predictive and diagnostic purposes. The applicant does not provide evidence for the use of the personalized learning environment for students to demonstrate mastery and progress accordingly. Nor does the applicant address a framework for magnet schools to provide direct student feedback that could be achieved through a learning management system that could provide opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways and at multiple times.

(e) Providing learning resources and instructional practices adaptable and accessible to students with disabilities and English learners.
The applicant states that "highly qualified special education teachers and teacher aids to support their special needs population". MCAS states that the curriculum implemented by the district includes materials that have been adapted by the publishers and is appropriate for students with disabilities and English learners. The applicant provides research to support these claims and some examples about specific publishers and resources.

The applicant provides a plan for additional support for a high quality plan with D(1)(e) though:
- increase the number of instructional practices available to teachers so they can reach a greater number of students (i.e., AVID and College Board training)
- extend the amount of time for instruction to allow for additional instruction and more diverse learning opportunities (after school or summer programs to increase instructional time)
- offer opportunities for students to learn study skills and social skills (AVID academic elective and mentoring programs).

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	**10**	**7**

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(D)(2) LEA and School Infrastructure

(a) Ensure students, parents educators, and other stakeholders have access to content, tools, and other learning resources
MCAS does not ensure compliance with D2a through the use of a high quality plan. The applicant suggests that all stakeholders, including parents, have access to district information and resources through a library, personal cell phones, or community housing computer banks. The applicant suggests access to resources through community activities, including district wide open houses and newsletters. The applicant does not specifically address student access to resource at home nor does the applicant provide a framework for students to access resources during the school day. Considerations for MCAS would be to utilize a LMS and with direct instructional resources such as teacher created learning resources; videos, collaborative projects, or assessments to provide additional help when students are away from school.

(b) Ensure students, parents educators, and other stakeholders have appropriate levels of technical support through a range of strategies
MCAS provides evidence to ensure that stakeholder have appropriate levels of technical support provided through an efficient technology work order system and real support in each building as well as a phone support. The applicant details a Personal Learning Plan Portal to grant access to students and parents. Overall, the applicant presents a convincing system of technical support for stakeholders.

(c) Using information technology systems that allow students, parents educators, and other stakeholders an open data format and to use the data in other electronic systems
The applicant provides evidence that addresses the use school data with My Data Button. Currently this in not and open data system that allows export data and reports. However the applicant is working with partners to develop solutions to improve the data system making it available to parents and students via the PLP system. This data will be placed in a warehouse to give parents a single location to locate all data needed. This is an appropriate solution.

(d) Ensure that LEAs and schools use inter-operable data systems (including systems for human resources data, student information data, budget data, and instructional improvement system data
The applicant provides specific examples of inter-operable data systems:

- Open Account Provisioning system
- SIS system to export Human Resources and student data with technology accounts
- Staff access to Human Resources information for payroll and certifications.
- Access to instructional improvement data on and off campus.
- Teachers access to PLP portal

These examples satisfy D(2)(d)

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score

(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(E)(1) Continuous Improvement Process
Strategy for Implementing a Rigorous Continuous Improvement Process
Provides timely and regular feedback on progress towards project goals and opportunities and ongoing corrections during and after the grant term. Address monitor and measure, and publicly sharing information on such investments as professional development, technology and staff.

MCAS provides a very comprehensive process and high quality plan to support a continuous improvement. The district uses the Deming framework that includes: Plan, Do, Study, Act. There is a convincing team structure, feedback system, and timeline to support a high quality plan for continuous improvement. The applicant addresses a system to adjust strategy, resources, and progress towards goals. The applicant also assigns a project evaluator over the project period that will create a series of formative and summative reports. These reports as well as grant updates and highlights, and results will be shared at community meetings, through press releases, newsletters, school Board meetings, and online at the MCAS website.   Overall MCAS presents a strong plan for the continuous improvement process.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

E (2) Ongoing Communication and Engagement

Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external for stakeholders
The applicant demonstrates strategies for internal engagement and communication through:ongoing communication with all members districts through regular meetings, evaluation reports, and online formats.

The applicant demonstrates reasonable strategies for external stakeholders with engagement and communication through the use of feedback from meetings. Administrators and the project director will conduct regularly scheduled meetings with the vendors to discuss the professional development schedules, agenda, and activities of the grant. The applicant plans teachers to participate in training for the academic programs. Principals and teachers will conduct and participate in their regularly schedule BLT, SIP, and PLC meetings and discuss grant implementation and ways to incorporate the project goals and activities in the SIP. Overall internal engagement is reasonable and provides a frame for continuous improvement.

The applicant is lacking with additional strategies that would define meaningful engagement for external stakeholder in particular for parents and community members. Consideration such as district level community engagement teams such as the teams developed internally could provide the applicant meaningful engagement with those key stakeholders. The applicant might also consider the development of key leadership with parent, community, or business stakeholders through specific partnerships and projects with the aim of developing capacity for continuous improvement.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	2

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

E (3) Performance Measures
Ambitious yet achievable performance measures both overall and by sub-group with annual targets
(a) The applicant must describe it's rational for selecting measures
MCAS describes reasonable rationale for selecting performance measure. For example the new RISE teacher and principal performance evaluation data is an indicator of success. Even though this is not implemented yet, the applicant demonstrates a high quality plan to address ongoing growth for this measure. Additionally, MCAS will employ ISTEP+ to increase the overall percentage of students passing both English/language arts and math: 6% (Year 1); 6% (Year 2); 6% (Year 3); 3% (Year 4).   These performance measures are ambitious and achievable.
Progress measures for high school includes the number of students that successfully complete high school in 4 years of time and the number of students that complete the Career Choice Class. There is reasonable rationale for selecting these measures, but there is not previous baseline data and the applicant does not suggest specific targets for these progress measures. Target measures for students in grade 3-8 in math and English/language arts are both ambitious and

achievable.

(b) The applicant must describe how the measure will provide rigorous, timely, and formative information leading to its proposed plan and theory of action regarding the the implementation of areas of success or concern
The applicant describes how frequently measures will be collected. For example, "Student attendance data is collected daily. The district reports student attendance to the Indiana State Board of Education." However the applicant is insufficient in addressing E(3)(b) for measures being rigorous or formative.

(c) The applicant must describe how it will review and improve the measure over time if it is insufficient to gauge implementation progress
The applicant does not describe specifically how it will review and improve measures over time. MCAS states for most targets: "results will be collected, analyzed and reported annually, with recommended changes communicated to the district superintendent and leaders." This statement is repeated throughout section E(3) and represents a vague approach to the manner in which measures will be evaluated.

Overall the applicant has 14 total performance measures with targets that are reasonable.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	3

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

E (3) Evaluating Effectiveness of Investments

MCAS has a convincing plan to evaluate investments through the project director as coordinator. The project director along with administrators will utilize a process and to evaluate both progress and investments.
Partnerships with vendors and provides will be examined. The applicant presents a reasonable timeline with achievable targets for evaluating investments. For example activities and persons responsible are listed on a timeline. MCAS does not provide direct deliverables or specific targets for vendors to meet, nor does MCAS include evidence of provisions with vendors to meet specific targets for implementation.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

F (1) Budget for the Project: Budget Narratives and Tables

(a) The applicant does identify all funds that support the project (RTTT-D, external foundation, LEA, State and Fed Funds)

(b) The applicant provides evidence that is reasonable and sufficient to support development and implementation: for example salaries and staff levels are reasonable additionally, professional development costs are detailed for training, equipment and supplies for learning projects are accounted for, and many other such details are explained. The budget in general demonstrates a thorough overview of anticipated costs.

(c) The plan is a clear and demonstrates a thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities
   (i) The applicant includes a description of funds (RTTT-D, LEA, State and Fed Funds, Title I Funds). For example in the Project-Level Budget Summary Table for the Math Component the budget provides for the Math and Science Partnership Grant, $213,253 in year 1 Title I - $30,000 each year for professional development (& software fees in year 1) General Fund - $39,000 each year to fund Professional Learning Community structure for 18 teachers.
   (ii) The applicant identifies funds that will be used for one-time investments versus those that will be ongoing operational costs that are incurred during and after the grant period. There is a focus on strategies that ensure that ensure long-term sustainability. For example the applicant is moderate and reasonable with staffing levels that represent ongoing investment that need to be sustained beyond the grant cycle. Additionally, the applicant includes a gradual transition between RTTT-D funds and LEA / Federal and Title I funding to create capacity and gradual dependence on local and sustainable funding streams. For example overall grant request for RTTT-D funds for AVID College Readiness

program is $414,333.15; however the majority of this cost is in the early stages of the grant cycle (year 1 and 2) with a gradual dependence on local funding and a reduction in the overall cost once the process and product are implemented with fidelity.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	3

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

F (2) Sustainability of Project Goals:
The applicant demonstrates some evidence of high-quality plan for sustainability of the projects goals for the time after the grant. The applicant demonstrates sustainability through developing professional development of new processes and systems at the early part of the grant cycle. This process builds capacity through training and investment with local staff. The plan does not show long-term support for aspects of technology and sustaining a 1:1 high quality technology plan. For example students are given access to devices with external connection using 3G and 4G data plans. The applicant states that students will be required" to maintain in their possession their personal learning device." It is unclear from this budget narrative who will pay for ongoing 3G or 4G data service with the device. MCAS states in the narrative that data plans for each device will cost approximately $45.00/month/device. Additionally the technology project budget narrative includes and annual ongoing cost of $686,140 per year from RTTT-D grant funds. There is no high quality plan for the district can sustain this cost beyond the grant period.

The applicant does not include budget assumptions or sources that justify continuation of the project for the three years after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	5

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Competitive Preference Priority

MCAS (Michigan City Area Schools) has formed multiple, coherent and sustainable partnerships in support of our students. This proposal will focus on the Open Door Adolescent Health Clinic

The applicant describes additional adolescent health supports through Open Door Adolescent Health Center. It has been a fully grant-funded program for 15 years, and includes programs geared toward the health of adolescents, such as prenatal support, substance abuse programs, depression and anxiety counseling and basic health screenings.

(1) The applicant provides a reasonable description of the partnership

(2) The applicant does Identify population-level and desired results for students; specifically increase enrollments among grade 9 students and increased access to mental health supports leading to fewer discipline referrals. Overall the MCAS states that these targets will lead to increased graduation rates. The applicant does address criteria through targeting child welfare issues.

(3) The applicant describe two positions for the partnership between MCAS and Open Door Adolescent Health Clinic. Two new positions are suggested an Academy Director and an Attendance Specialist. The applicant does not provide a justifiable strategy to suggest the manner in which these positions will be leveraged to accomplish the increase in student attendance. Additionally, the strategy does not provide for scaling the model beyond the participating students. MCAS does not present reasonable logic that represents a high quality plan for improved results over time.

(4) The applicant does describe how partnership would integrate education and other services. The applicant provides no innovative strategies to accomplish the goal of increase attendance and greater academic engagement.

(5) The applicant provides a reasonable description of how the staff within the clinic would operate in partnership with the school. For example: "The Open Door Adolescent Health staff would work with our counseling department to

provide additional training and supports that will enable the counseling staff to work effectively with this targeted group of students beyond the scope of this grant." Again the applicant lacks the operational details and strategies to demonstrate success.

The applicant states that "the Academy Director, principal and Building Leadership team will work with Open Door to determine the needs and assets of the 9th grade academy and the entire high school population, the school community, and parents to create a stronger system of supports that will improve results over time, maximize impacts, and resolve challenges." This strategy is justifiable.

6) The applicant does identify its annual performance measures for the proposed population-level and describe and states those in results for students. For example: Access to a social worker through the Adolescent Health Clinic to work on attendance and social and/or personal issues that create barriers for individual student success.

- Students will maintain at least 95% attendance or greater
- Students will have 50% fewer behavioral referrals from 2012-13 to 2013-14 as they move from the Academy to 10th grade.

The annual performance measures can not be determined to be ambitious yet achievable due to the fact that the applicant does not provide any baseline for ninth grade attendance.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Not Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Absolute Priority 1: Personalized Learning Environments.

The applicant's plan for LEA-wide goals for improved outcomes demonstrates moderate evidence to improve performance and increase equity. As noted in A(4) the applicant does not include all sub-groups, has no data or ongoing data collection plan for college enrollment rates and postsecondary degree attainment, is not ambitious in increasing graduation rates, and includes no dynamic growth measures such as a value added or local growth measure.

The applicant lacks the overall strategies and goals to coherently and comprehensively address the specific manner as to how it will build on the core educational assurance areas and create learning environment designed to significantly improve learning and teaching. For example the applicant lacks a convincing logic pattern to improve instruction. The reform does not have enough structure and support to provide teachers with the incentive to change instruction within the classroom.

The 1:1 technology implementation is unrealistic, lacking a compelling strategic approach and lacking sustainability. The 1:1 proposal also lacks the curriculum and learning foundations for success. The applicant does not develop a logical pattern for students to progress based on performance as needed in a Personalized Learning Environment.

Data systems within the proposal are not comprehensive enough to handle the complexity of the reform effort.

The magnet school proposal is compelling and offers a broad vision for reform, but the curriculum support, planning involved, and high level of teacher culture of collaboration lacks focus.

Total	210	141